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Date *May 25, 2006*

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DESCRIPTION

ELECTRONIC DEVICE AND FUNCTION ASSIGNING METHOD

Technical Field

The present invention relates to an
5 electronic device, such as a video camera, a digital
camera, a cellular phone, or a PDA, which has a display
panel and an operating section and also to a method of
assigning a function to a key.

Background Art

10 As an electronic device such as a video
camera is becoming small, the number of hard keys
(hereinafter simply referred to as keys) tends to
decrease. As a result, functions that cannot be
assigned to keys need to be operated on a menu. Thus,
15 the video camera cannot be quickly operated and there
are not a lot of changes that user sees these functions.
Consequently, its operation would become bothersome.

Even if many keys are provided, since the
purpose for which the user uses the video camera
20 depends on himself or herself, all functions pre-
assigned to keys are not always functions that the user
needs with keys.

In contrast with related art of which only
one function the user desires is assigned to one key,
25 with respect to keys of a commander as a remote
controlling device for a television receiver, a
technology that allows a plurality of functions to be

sequentially assigned to one key whenever it is operated is described in Japanese Patent Application Unexamined Publication No. 2002-10380.

As described in Japanese Patent Application Unexamined Publication No. 2002-10380, in the method of assigning a plurality of functions that are sequentially provided to one key, although the number of keys can be decreased, functions assigned to one key are restricted. In addition, it is difficult for the user to remember functions that he or she has assigned to the key. Thus, it cannot be said that the operability is improved with the technology. In addition, since functions are not assigned to a plurality of keys, it cannot be said that the operability of the method of assigning functions is satisfactory.

Therefore, an object of the present invention is to provide an electronic device and a method of assigning functions that allow a function of quickly displaying a setting screen for menu items or a setting screen for non-menu items to be assigned to a key so as to improve the operability of the electronic device.

Disclosure of the Invention

To solve the foregoing problem, the present invention is an electronic device having a display panel and a plurality of keys to which desired functions can be assigned, comprising:

displaying a plurality of items on the display panel; setting a desired item which is selected from the plurality of items; displaying a setting screen corresponding to the desired item; and setting the desired item by using the setting screen,

wherein a function for displaying the setting screen when one of the keys is operated is assigned to at least one of the plurality of keys. In addition, according to the present invention, a function other than functions that can be set on a menu is assigned.

In addition, the present invention is a method of assigning desired functions to a plurality of keys, comprising the steps of:

displaying a plurality of items and selecting a desired item from the plurality of items; and

selecting a key to which a function is assigned from the plurality of keys,

wherein a function which has been selected at the function selecting step and which can be set on a menu is assigned to the key selected at the key selecting step. In addition, according to the present invention, a function other than functions that can be set on a menu is assigned.

Brief Description of Drawings

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing an appearance of a video camera according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram showing an example of assign keys.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram schematically showing a structure of a signal process of the video camera.

Fig. 4 is a schematic diagram showing screens appearing on a liquid crystal display panel upon settings on a menu.

Fig. 5 is a flow chart showing a flow of an assigning process for a assign key.

Fig. 6 is a schematic diagram showing an example of screens appearing on the liquid crystal display panel in an assigning process for an assign key.

Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram showing another example of screens appearing on the liquid crystal display panel in an assigning process for an assign key.

Best Modes for Carrying out the Invention

Next, with reference to the accompanying drawings, an embodiment of the present invention will be described. Fig. 1 shows an external structure of a video camera according to the present invention. Reference numeral 1 denotes a lens housing section. Light from an object enters an imager such as a CCD through a lens. Reference numeral 2 denotes a zoom ring. Reference numeral 3 denotes a stereo microphone. Reference numeral 4 denotes an electronic view finder. Reference numeral 5 denotes a liquid crystal

display monitor of for example 2.5 inch type. The liquid crystal display monitor 5 can be freely housed in a concave housing portion 6 on one side of the body. A tape cassette housing section (not shown) is disposed on the other side of the body. The tape cassette housing section houses for example a DV (Digital Video) standard tape cassette. An object is shot by a camera section. The resultant video signal of the object is processed. The processed video signal is recorded onto a magnetic tape of the tape cassette by a rotating head.

The video camera shown in Fig. 1 has a plurality of operation keys. Among these operation keys, assign keys 7, a menu button 8, and a selection/push-confirmation dial 9 relate to the present invention. As shown in Fig. 2, the assign keys 7 are composed of a plurality of (for example, three) assign keys (hereinafter referred to as the assign keys 1, 2, and 3). The assign keys 7 are disposed at a position where the user can easily operate them, for example, near the zoom ring 2. Thus, the assign keys 7 are apart from the other operation keys. As will be described later, the user can assign his or her desired functions to each of the assign keys 7. For example, when the user presses for example one of the assign keys 7, he or she can perform his or her desired process such as a record starting process, a tape forwarding process, a tape rewinding process, a lens-

captured image process, or the like. The keys of the assign keys 7 and so forth are not limited to hard keys such as pushbutton keys, slide type keys, or pressure sensitive switches, but touch panel keys of which the user touches the liquid crystal display panel 5 with his or her finger or the like.

Fig. 3 shows an outline of a structure of a signal process of the video camera. In Fig. 3, solid lines denote a path of video/audio signals, a path of a stream, and a CPU (Central Processing Unit) bus. The CPU composes a controller. Dotted lines denote a path of a control signal. Light from an object enters an imager 12 composed of a device such as a CCD (Charge Coupled Device) through a lens 11. An output signal of the imager 12 is supplied to a camera signal processing section 13. The camera signal processing section 13 performs various types of camera signal processes such as a color separating process, a digitalizing process, and so forth.

A lens-captured video signal is supplied from the camera signal processing section 13 to a base band processing section 14. An indication signal for a menu and so forth is supplied from an OSD (On Screen Display) section 15 to the base band processing section 14. The OSD section 15 generates an indication signal for a menu screen and various types of setting screens corresponding to commands supplied from a controller 16

composed of a CPU. The base band signal processing section 14 combines the indication signal supplied from the OSD section 15 and the lens-captured video signal.

5 Connected to the controller 16 through the CPU bus is a non-volatile memory, for example an EEPROM (Electrical Erasable Programmable ROM). An example of the non-volatile memory is a removable memory card (not shown). The CPU bus of the controller 16 is connected to the base band signal processing section 14.

10 A video signal supplied from the base band signal processing section 14 is compressed by a compression encoder 18 according to DCT (Discrete Cosine Transform) or the like. The compressed signal is supplied to a multiplexer 19. The multiplexer 19
15 multiplexes the compression-encoded audio data, system data, and so forth and generates record data. The record data are supplied to a record processing section 20.

20 The record processing section 20 performs an error correction encoding process, a channel coding process, and so forth. The record signal (record stream data) supplied from the record processing section 20 is supplied to a rotating head of a tape head section 21. The rotating head records the record
25 signal as diagonal tracks on the magnetic tape.

A reproduction signal (reproduction stream data) reproduced from the magnetic tape by the rotating

head of the tape head section 21 is supplied to a reproduction processing section 22. The reproduction processing section 22 performs a channel coding decoding process, an error collecting process, and so forth.

Reproduction data are supplied from the reproduction processing section 22 to a demultiplexer 23. The demultiplexer 23 separates the reproduction data into video data, audio data, and system data. A decompressing decoder 24 decompresses the compression-encoded data. The decompressed video data are supplied from the decompressing decoder 24 to the base band signal processing section 14.

The electronic view finder 4 and the liquid crystal display panel 5 are connected to the base band signal processing section 14. These display devices display a lens-captured image, a tape-reproduced image, various types of menus, and so forth. The controller 16 and a key device 25 are connected. The key device 25 includes the assign keys 7, the menu button 8, the selection/push-confirmation dial 9, and so forth. The selection/push-confirmation dial 9 is an input device of which when the dial is rotated, a selection item can be changed on a screen of the liquid crystal display panel 5 and when the dial is pushed, the selected item can be confirmed.

Next, with reference to Fig. 4, a GUI menu on

which the video camera is set for various modes and a method of assigning a short cut to a desired menu item thereof will be described. The CPU of the controller 16 executes these processes according to the program.

5 When the video camera is set, the menu button 8 is pressed. When the menu button 8, a menu screen appears on the liquid crystal display panel 5. A desired menu item, for example, "camera setting", is selected from menu items on a screen 31a shown in Fig. 4A with the
10 selection/push-confirmation dial 9. The selected menu item is for example highlighted so that it is distinguished from the other menu items.

Menu items appear as icons on the left end of the screen. Besides "camera setting", there are menu
15 items "audio setting", "memory setting", and "others". While the video camera is in the record pause state (record standby state), the menu screen appears. An image (not shown) that is being shot appears as a background image on the liquid crystal display panel 5.

20 The menu has a hierarchical structure. The menu item "camera setting" has lower hierarchical levels for example sub setting items "shake compensation", "wide setting", "progressive record", "sharpness", and "gain level". A screen 31b shown in
25 Fig. 4B indicates the state of which "camera setting" - > "shake compensation" have been selected by the selection/push-confirmation dial 9. In addition, the

screen 31b indicates the current setting of "shake compensation", for example "ON". The selection/push-confirmation dial 9 is an input device of which when the dial is rotated, one of a plurality of menu items can be selected and when the dial is pushed, the selected item can be confirmed.

After the menu item "shake compensation" has been confirmed, as shown in Fig. 4C, a "shake compensation" setting screen 31c appears. With the selection/push-confirmation dial 9, the menu item "shake compensation" can be set for a desired state. For example, "shake compensation" can be set for "ON/OFF". Likewise, another menu item can be selected. When another menu item is selected, a setting screen corresponding thereto appears. The selected menu item can be set for a desired state on the setting screen.

After one of the foregoing menu items, for example "shake compensation", has been assigned to one of the assign keys 7, for example the assign key 1, as shown in Fig. 4D, when the assign key 1 is operated, the shake compensation setting screen 31c quickly appears on the liquid crystal display monitor 5. In other words, the assign key 1 functions as a shortcut key of "shake compensation". Since a setting screen corresponding to a pre-assigned menu item quickly appears, even if an object is being shot by the video camera, it can be set for a desire state.

The process of assigning a function to an assign key is performed by the CPU of the controller 16 according to the program. Specifically, an assign key setting menu is selected. With the selection/push-confirmation dial 9, a function is assigned to an assign key on the assign key setting menu appearing on the liquid crystal display panel 5. In other words, by rotating the dial, an assign key to which a desired function is assigned is selected. Thereafter, the desired function is selected from the menu items. Thereafter, the dial is pushed to confirm the selected menu item.

Menu items assigned to the assign keys are not limited to those assigned with the selection/push-confirmation dial 9 on the menu. For example, a setting item of whether to display a color bar on the screen of the liquid crystal display panel 5 can be assigned to an assign key.

According to an embodiment of the present invention, when one of paired functions is assigned to one of the plurality of assign keys, a message that prompts the user to assign the other of the pair to the assign key appears. Next, with reference to a flow chart shown in Fig. 5 and display screens of the liquid crystal display panel 5 shown in Fig. 6, a function assigning process for assign keys will be described.

At step ST1, the menu button 8 is pressed.

The menu appears on the liquid crystal display panel 5. A plurality of menu items appear on the menu screen. At step ST2, "changing user setting" is selected from the menu items. Since the assign keys 7 are composed of three assign keys, at step ST3, key selection step, an assign key to which the selected function is assigned is selected.

When the menu button 8 is pressed, the menu screen appears. When the menu item "others" is selected on the menu screen, a screen 41a appears. Fig. 6A shows the screen 41a. The menu item "others" has sub menu items "changing user setting", "record mode", and "record format". When "changing user setting" is selected, a screen 41b shown in Fig. 6B appears. When "changing user setting" is confirmed, a key selection screen 41c shown in Fig. 6C appears. The menu "changing user setting" is a menu on which menu items are assigned to the assign keys 7.

On the key selection screen 41c, "user setting 1" denotes a menu item assigned to the assign key 1; and "user setting 2" and "user setting 3" denote menu items assigned to the assign key 2 and the assign key 3, respectively. On the key selection screen 41c shown in Fig. 6C, all the user settings have been assigned "blank". In other words, no executable functions have been assigned to these assign keys. Since the assign keys can be assigned "blank", if the

user does not need to assign functions to the assign keys, even if he or she mistakenly touches these assign keys, the video camera can be prevented from malfunctioning. In addition, the same function can be assigned to the plurality of assign keys.

At step ST4, function selection step, when the selection/push-confirmation dial 9 is rotated, a desired function to be assigned is selected. At step ST5, when the selection/push-confirmation dial 9 is pushed, the selected function is assigned to the selected assign key. Functions assigned to the assign keys are not limited to functions assigned with the menu button 8 and the selection/push-confirmation dial 9 on the menu, but functions that can be assigned to only the assign keys. When one of functions that can be assigned with the menu button 8 and the selection/push-confirmation dial 9 is assigned to an assign key, the assign key functions as a short cut key.

When "user setting 1" is selected on the key selection screen 41c, it is changed to a function selection screen 41d shown in Fig. 6D. On the function selection screen 41d, as selectable menu items, there are for example "blank", "edit search +", "edit search -", and "indexing". "Edit search +" is a function of reproducing the tape forwards in the record pause state. In contrast "edit search -" is a function of reproducing the tape backwards in the record pause

state. These functions exemplify paired functions. Other examples of paired functions are "tel/wide", and "focus ±".

After step ST4, function assignment, a
5 setting result information screen appears (at step ST5).
In Fig. 6D, when "user setting 1" is set for e.g. "edit
search +", a setting result information screen 41e
appears as shown in Fig. 6E. The screen 41 indicates
that the setting has been completed and that the
10 function "edit search +" has been assigned to the
assign key 1. In addition, the screen 41 indicates a
message that prompts the user to assign the other
function of the paired functions, namely "edit search".
Instead of the assignment prompt menu, the paired
15 function may be automatically assigned to another
assign key.

A predetermined wait time, for example, five
seconds, is preset for the setting result information
screen 41e. After the wait time has elapsed, as shown
20 in Fig. 6F, a key selection screen 41f that indicates
assigned results of the assign keys 7 appears. In
contrast with the key selection screen 41c, the key
selection screen 41f indicates the latest assigned
states of the assign keys.

25 At step ST6, the latest assign key
information is stored to a non-volatile memory (EEPROM
17). At step ST7, it is determined whether to perform

a function assigning process for another assign key. When the assigning process is continued, the flow returns to step ST3 (selection of an assign key to which a function is assigned). To quit the assigning process, the menu button 8 is pressed and the menu is closed (at sep ST8).

Functions assigned to the assign keys 7 can be deleted. In addition, functions assigned to two assign keys can be changed with each other. Fig. 7 describes this changing process.

When the menu button 8 is pressed, the menu screen appears. When the menu item "others" is selected on the menu screen, a screen 51a appears. Fig. 7A shows the screen 51a. The menu item "others" has a sub menu item "changing user setting". When the menu item "changing user setting" is selected, a screen 51b shown in Fig. 7B appears. When the menu item "changing user setting" is confirmed, a key selection screen 51c shown in Fig. 7C appears.

The key selection screen 51c indicates functions currently assigned to the function keys. For example, the function "edit search +" has been assigned to the assign key 1. The function "indexing" has been assigned to the assign key 2. The function "edit search -" has been assigned to the assign key 3.

When the user setting 1 (assign key 1) is selected on the key selection screen 51c and confirmed,

an assigned function changing screen 51d appears. When the user setting 1 (assign key 2) is selected and confirmed on the assigned function changing screen 51d, a process of changing the functions of the user settings 1 and 2 with each other is performed. As shown in Fig. 7E, the function assigned to the user setting 1 and the function assigned to the user setting 2 have been changed to "indexing" and "edit search +", respectively. The changed results are written to the non-volatile memory.

According to an embodiment of the present invention, a sequence of operations that the user performed can be stored and assigned to one of the plurality of assign keys. For example, as a menu item, "start of storing a sequence of video camera operations" is prepared. After the storing operation stare is tuned on, when one of blank assign keys is pressed, the storing operation is started. A sequence of video camera operations performed after the assign key is pressed until it is pressed again are stored to the non-volatile memory. After the sequence has been stored, when the assign key is pressed, the same sequence of operations that have been stored are performed.

After a sequence of operations have been stored, when only the assign key is pressed, the operations can be executed. Thus, since a sequence of

operations that the user often uses can be executed only by pressing only the assign key, the video camera can be easily operated in an emergency situation or the like.

5 Thus, unlike the case that a menu is opened, a menu item is selected from a plurality of menu items on the menu for each of a plurality of keys, the selected key is set for the selected menu item on a setting screen corresponding thereto, when a key is
10 operated, a setting screen for a selected item quickly appears. As a result, since a shortcut function can be accomplished, the number of operation steps necessary for the setting can be decreased. In addition, according to an embodiment of the present invention, a
15 function for displaying a setting screen for unique items other than menu items selected on the menu can be assigned to each of the plurality of keys. In addition, since a setting screen quickly appears, settings can be quickly changed.

20 In the foregoing, an embodiment of the present invention has been specifically described. However, the present invention is not limited to the foregoing embodiment. Instead, various modifications corresponding to the spirit of the present invention
25 may be made. For example, the key selecting step and the function assigning step can be changed with each other. In addition, the present invention can be

widely applied to various types of electronic devices
that have a display panel on which a menu appears
besides a video camera.